

ABOUT MORAYSHIRE MONITOR FARM

Farm Name **Corskie Farm, Garmouth, Fochabers, Moray, IV32 7NN**

Meeting Number **03**

Meeting Date **Tuesday 11th July 2017**

Next Meeting **Tuesday 31st October 2017**

Corskie Farm is run by Iain Green in partnership with his mother and father. The family have been farming in the area for over 60 years. Over 1,440 hectares (3,560 acres) in total is currently farmed by the business.

Arable: The main arable enterprise consists of growing Spring Barley (535ha) for malting. Winter Wheat (86ha), Winter barley (70ha) and Spring Oats (11ha) are also grown, with the majority being used on-farm as livestock feed.

Cattle: The family run 380 cross cow suckler herd, alongside a 200 cow pedigree Simmental herd. Simmental and shorthorn bulls as well AI is used to spread out calving across the year.

Sheep: There are 600 Mules and Mule cross Texel sheep which are lambed in April.

Pigs: At Corskie there is an indoor breeding herd of 380 sows, producing breeding gilts for Rattlerow.



"The different farm enterprises are fairly well integrated," Iain says, "as well as growing our own feed through the cereals side, we also use the manure from the livestock on the arable fields and pasture. We apply it differently in different areas, using our soil and yield maps to make sure we are controlling our inputs and maintaining good soil fertility and nutrient balance."



Management Group

Andrew Anderson (Chair), Hugh Thomson, Robbie Newlands, Martin Birse, Robert Manson, Charlie Gray, Cameron MacIver, Ian McHattie, Stewart Grant, Stewart Stronach and Stewart Rothnie. *Chairman, Andrew, is photographed here addressing the community group.*

In addition, there is also three students from SRUC Craibstone campus, who have been selected to sit in on Management Group meetings and then to report back to their college class.

KEY MESSAGES

● Creep Feeding:

- Take advantage of the higher feed conversion ratio (FCR) in young calves before weaning as it is possible to achieve 2.5-4:1kg pre-weaning, as opposed to 8-9:1kg after weaning when stock tend to move onto their winter rations.
- It is cheaper to feed the calf than it is to feed the cow.
- Creep feeding can not only increase daily live weight gains but also help to develop the rumen earlier and can reduce stress at weaning with less alteration to the calves diet.
- Creep feed diets vary greatly – a standard mix usually consists of barley, oats and dark grains. Iain purchases a pre-made mix with higher molasses content to help encourage more intake.
- Consideration to be given to future of the calves being creep fed, e.g. for bull calves potentially for future breeding stock a diet with highly readily available starch (finely bruised barley) can have negative effects on fertility.
- Alkaline feeds (e.g. maxammon treated barley) can increase intakes and increase daily LWG.

● Weaning Calves:

- Weigh calves at weaning to give you valuable information:
 - LWG over time
 - Comparisons year to year
 - Males vs. females
 - Bulls vs. stots etc.
- Weaning weights not only give you information about the calf but also the cow,
 - Weight of calf against the weight of the cow varies between 30-70%.
- Reduce stress at weaning where possible to help reduce respiratory problems and the weaning 'check'.
- Leaving cow and calf groups at opposite sides of a gate, weaning half of the calves within a field first or using the 'Quiet Wean' nose tags (*pictured above*) were suggested ways to help reduce weaning stress.



● Arable:

- UK wheat balance sheet is tight. US currently at critical pollination stage with high temperatures having the potential to cause issues which can move the world wheat market.
- Malting barley area declining, new varieties are slow to turn over and gain acceptance from maltsters. Pressure from distilleries regarding provenance of malting barley.
- Spring Barley variety plots currently being carried out at Corskie, varieties include Fairing, Dioptric, Laureate, Concerto and Scholar. Grain maltsters and distillers are looking into these improved varieties with Laureate recently being approved for malting.
- Increase the yield potential of crops by considering not only the macro nutrients (N, P, K) but also the micro nutrients (S, Mg, Cu in particular) which each play a part in grain yield and quality.

AREAS OF DISCUSSION Expand on two of the key messages discussed and what were the key concerns or innovations

- Over 60 farmers enjoyed an interactive day discussing; creep feeding and weaning options for cattle, grain marketing, bio stimulants trial update, spring & winter barley varieties.
- Andrew Anderson, chair of the Management Group, welcomed everyone to Corskie and gave a run down of the day planned ahead.
- Iain has dug up plants from the light and heavy ground for the bio-stimulant trial update, some slight differences could be seen in the treated and untreated crops, but judgement will be made at harvest.
- There were three stations where the attendees split into groups to visit:
- Hugh Thomson who is part of the Management Group and is also a vet, farmer and works for Harbro, spoke to the group about creep feeding and weaning options, also touching on mastitis in cows after weaning.
- Gavin Will from GrainCo discussed the grain markets in the UK and worldwide, highlighting the potential opportunities for local growers with the ability to forward contract and distilleries ever more looking for grain provenance.
- The attendees studied the Winter and Spring Barley trial plots, which allowed comparison between the different varieties in the same field. Iain Lindsay from Syngenta walked the groups through the field trials:
 - The winter barley hybrid varieties require lower seed rates (200 seeds/m²) to allow larger grains, the varieties have very competitive and prolific establishment/growth, early N applications are important to set yields later in the season.
 - The newer spring barley varieties tend to have longer straw lengths, therefore a robust growth regulator program may be required as part of the crop risk management.
 - Discussion was also had regarding the use of macro and micro nutrients on barley crops.
- The meeting finished with a BBQ to help engage the community group and encourage further discussion. Overall the meeting was very positive with good interaction from the community group.

FARMERS UPDATE

- The Corskie rain gauge seen 100mm more rain between April & June than ever before.
- The first cut of silage is now in the pit, with the second cut potentially only a couple of weeks away.
- Spring barley has had its final spray; winter wheat also had its final head spray.
- Winter barley has been 'sprayed off' last week.
- The autumn born calves have been weaned, bull calves taken inside, heifers are at grass.
- Iain has secured additional contracts for spring barley, 100t for harvest 2017 100t for harvest 2018, so there is opportunities to forward contract.
- Iain has run out of straw and it is proving difficult to find locally. The pigs use a large amount of straw year round and require a steady supply.
- Corskie has had success at the Royal Highland Show, Fettercairn and Echt so far this year with the Simmentals.

OPPORTUNITIES/CHALLENGES

- Opportunity to look into new malting varieties of Spring Barley, particularly since the announcement of Laureate being accepted now by maltsters.
- Shortage of locally available straw during the late summer. This will be overcome once winter barley is combined, but at the moment supplies are tight.
 - Reluctance to import straw from further south as risk of black grass.
- A challenge all year round is having enough grass and managing grass to full potential. This is something that is important to most farms within Morayshire and will be looked at during the Morayshire Monitor Farm programme.

ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING

- Gather financial and performance data and feed into FarmBench.
- Yield map and quality test the bio-stimulant treated spring barley at harvest.
- Yield map and quality test barley variety trials at harvest.
- Take advantage of opportunities to forward contract grain for 2018 harvest.
- Cost out different creep feeds, taking consideration of time and extra costs for mixing.
- Try out the 'Quiet Wean' nose tags.

FACILITATOR CONTACT DETAILS

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